



News Release

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UCAN's "Sun Guy" Campaign Effective in Getting Utahns to Wear Sunscreen

(Salt Lake City, UT) – The Utah Cancer Action Network's TV commercial, featuring a wise cracking "Sun Guy" wearing a big foam suit and bright yellow tights, is getting more Utahns to wear sunscreen. In a recent survey, 30 percent of Utahns who participated reported changing their behavior after seeing the commercial. Sixty-six percent of that group said they "started using sunscreen," and 23 percent reported they "use sunscreen more often" after being exposed to the message.

"We are thrilled with the survey results," said Janet Heins, coordinator, Comprehensive Cancer, Utah Department of Health. "A 30 percent change in behavior is a huge impact."

Of those who did not report changing their behavior, 69 percent said it was because they "already do what was recommended." UCAN's sun protection recommendations include applying sunscreen with a SPF of 15 or higher, wearing sunglasses, wide brimmed hats and long sleeves, and avoiding the sun between the hours of 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Data also show the UCAN advertisement message is clear and memorable with 83 percent recalling the skin cancer commercial asked them to use sunscreen. More than 70 percent recalled the main message to be: "wear sunscreen to protect yourself" and "don't take the sun lightly."

UCAN developed their skin cancer awareness marketing campaign in 2003 with a goal to reduce skin cancer in Utah. The state's population is more prone to skin cancer because of a high altitude, a large number of fair complexioned people, many sunny days and access to outdoor recreation year round.

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The recent survey results indicated the UCAN campaign is making a difference in awareness with more than three-quarters of respondents identifying "sun exposure" as a factor that makes someone more likely to get skin cancer. Ninety-two percent of the survey respondents identified "10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m." as the most likely hours to get sunburned.

According to Heins, a 2004 Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance Survey showed that 34.73 percent of Utah adults always or nearly always use sunscreen or sun block before going outside on a sunny day. On the flip side, that means that more than 65 percent of the population is still at risk.

"We still have a long way to go in educating Utahns about the importance of wearing sunscreen year round," added Heins. "This is very important because Utah's melanoma rates are the fourth highest in the nation and nearly 60 Utahns die each year from this disease."

About UCAN

UCAN is comprised of 75 community partners including private and non-profit agencies, hospitals, universities, the UDOH, The American Cancer Society and Huntsman Cancer Institute. UCAN is funded by grants from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

This information and other important tips and links to skin cancer prevention Web sites are available at www.ucan.cc, or by calling 1-888-222-2542.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.